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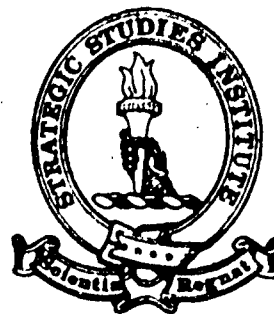
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Can NATO Transcend Its European Borders?

NATO Out-of-Area Disputes

Douglas T. Stuart

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February 21, 1991

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COMMENTS

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050.

FOREWORD

War in the Persian Gulf at a time of revolutionary changes in European security has sparked new interest in burdensharing and NATO out-of-area operations. This study reviews the history and contentious nature of the debate over out-of-theater use of NATO military assets. The author concludes that this, more than any other issue, could pull the alliance apart. Intra-alliance conflict is, according to the author, avoidable if NATO manages the present and future crises through a combination of informal arrangements within the alliance and more direct collaboration with resurgent organizations such as the Western European Union (WEU).

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this study as a contribution to the field of European Security Studies.

Karl W. Robinson

KARL W. ROBINSON
Colonel, U.S. Army
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

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Douglas T. Stuart is Associate Professor and Director of International Studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA. He received his Ph.D. in 1979 from the University of Southern California and taught for both USC and Johns Hopkins University prior to joining the Dickinson faculty. He is a former NATO Fellow and Visiting Scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., and a member of the NATO Fellowships Review Committee for the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES). A specialist in NATO affairs and northeast Asian security, he is the author, co-author or editor of four books and over 20 published articles. His most recent book, with William Tow, is entitled *The Limits of Alliance: NATO Out-Of-Area Problems Since 1949* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

CAN NATO TRANSCEND ITS EUROPEAN BORDERS?

At first glance, it is a familiar picture. An American delegation is once again in Brussels trying unsuccessfully to convince the NATO allies to join the United States in an extra-European contingency. But first impressions can be deceiving. For the circumstances surrounding the ongoing crisis in the Persian Gulf are unprecedented in NATO's 42 year history. And for the first time in that history there is a real danger that intra-alliance disputes arising from an out-of-area challenge could destroy the alliance. Western policy makers must tread carefully if they are to avoid this outcome. They must be guided by the lessons of past attempts at out-of-area cooperation, and be able to adapt these lessons to current circumstances.

This monograph is an attempt to contribute to the evolving debate about the future of NATO out-of-area cooperation. It will look at the historical record and consider its relevance in a post-cold war era. It will also offer some recommendations for managing the intra-NATO debate about allied responsibilities in the Persian Gulf.

Background: NATO Out-Of-Area Disputes Since 1949.

History is usually a grab bag of contradictory information. Fortunately for this study, the history of NATO out-of-area disputes provides us with uncommonly clear and indisputable lessons. The most important of these is that NATO governments have never permitted disagreements over issues beyond the NATO Treaty area to jeopardize the alliance. From time to time, allies have been encouraged by the rhetoric of "common security interests" and "Atlantic Community" to use the NATO forum to solicit allied support for policies that they are pursuing beyond NATO's borders. On other occasions, allies have taken advantage of the NATO framework to meddle in the extra-European affairs of other NATO members. These actions have frequently resulted in intense, recriminatory disputes within NATO. But the disputes have never spun out of control. This is because all parties have maintained a clear sense of priority in their security calculations: the survival and the efficient functioning of NATO has always mattered more to these governments than the specific out-of-area situation.

When NATO was established in 1949 it was essentially an American protectorate. Washington extended its security umbrella — including its fledgling nuclear capability — over the nations of Western Europe at a time when those nations were incapable of separately or collectively resisting the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly under these circumstances, the United States had the largest say during the discussions about the nature and identity of the new alliance system. It is a credit to American foresight, however, and to America's commitment to democratic values, that the U.S. delegation to the Washington Preparatory Talks took the interests and concerns of Canada and key West European governments into consideration when it formulated the NATO Treaty. The compromise nature of the final product is reflected in the tension between Article 6 and Article 4 of the Treaty. Article 6 specifically designates Europe, North America and the North Atlantic as NATO's area of responsibility. Washington strongly favored a geographically delimited alliance so that it could pursue its extra-European interests without the interference of

junior allies, and so that it would not be drawn into the overseas adventures of these junior allies. Article 4, on the other hand, commits all signatory governments to "consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened." There is no geographical limitation to the consultation clause. Washington was willing to accept Article 4 because it reassured key allies that their extra-European concerns could be raised within NATO and because it committed all parties to nothing more than consultation.

At the core of American concern about NATO's boundaries was a fundamental disdain toward those European governments that were trying to hang onto the vestiges of empire after World War II. Post-war American anticolonialism did not have the intensity or the theoretical coherence that Franklin Roosevelt had brought to the topic. But most post-war policy makers nonetheless shared FDR's suspicion that the European imperial powers could not be trusted to manage the affairs of the Third World. For their part, these European governments viewed the reestablishment of control over former territories as a right, which had been confirmed by their victory in the war against fascism. All parties understood that NATO would be one of the forums within which this incipient disagreement would be played out.

The tension between American anticolonialism and European globalism set the stage for the next two decades of out-of-area disagreements within NATO. Of the 13 out-of-area disputes which surfaced between 1949 and 1968, the United States demonstrated its opposition to European extra-regional policies in all but two cases (see the Appendix for a list of NATO out-of-area crises since 1949). The two exceptions were the Korean War (1950-53) and the Laos crisis (1959-62). In the other 11 instances the United States either rejected allied solicitations of support for extra-European contingencies or used the NATO forum to communicate its dissatisfaction with particular allied policies in the Third World.¹

Many European allies were confused by American criticisms of their imperial policies. Didn't Washington realize that any Third World territory under West European control was a bulwark against Soviet-inspired instability and Communist expansion? Weren't the forces of nationalism in the Third World either managed from Moscow or vulnerable to Communist exploitation?

Various factions within the U.S. policy making community were sensitive to these arguments during the cold war, and these factions did have a restraining influence in discussions about the problems posed by European imperialism. For the most part, however, the logic of anti-Communist containment actually worked against the interests of those European governments that were trying to preserve the "confetti of empire." U.S. policy makers (particularly within the Joint Chiefs and the NSC) argued that the anti-Soviet struggle in the Third World was too important to be trusted to the European allies. They warned that these governments were too preoccupied with their narrowly defined national interests. More to the point, they warned that these governments did not have the military strength or the political will which would be required to hang on indefinitely in the Third World. Under these circumstances, European-controlled territories were viewed by Washington more as liabilities than assets.

An illustrative incident occurred at the time of the signing of the NATO Treaty (April 1949). British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin used the occasion of his visit to Washington for the signing ceremony to meet with key American policy makers in order to help cement the "special

relationship." In a closed meeting with the U.S. Policy Planning Staff he broached the issue of the imminent victory of the forces of Mao Zedong in China, and attempted to reassure his American audience that they could rely on Britain to "stand firm" in Hong Kong against the Chinese Communist threat. If necessary, Bevin noted, Hong Kong could become a "Berlin of the East." Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who was present during these discussions, subsequently recorded his reaction to Bevin's analogy; "the thought of another Berlin, if this involved another airlift, filled me with considerable distaste."² Acheson's reaction is indicative of a widespread American concern that "strongpoints" like Hong Kong could rapidly become unwelcome American strategic responsibilities if the management of these holdings was left in the hands of America's enfeebled allies.

The depth and scope of U.S.-European disagreement finally became clear to all parties in 1956, when Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt. For the European allies, the issue went beyond guaranteeing unrestricted access to the Suez Canal. Nasser's nationalization of the canal was a test of British and French resolve and commitment to protect the elements of their respective empires anywhere in the world. Washington understood the interests and concerns which led Paris and London to invade Suez. But the United States also believed that a military solution to the crisis would fuel anticolonialism throughout the Third World and provide new opportunities for Soviet aggression and infiltration. Other NATO allies also criticized the Franco-British operation in Suez, on the grounds that it diverted Western attention away from Central Europe at a time when the Soviets were brutally suppressing an uprising in Hungary. West Germany was particularly concerned about the risks of spillover from the Hungarian crisis while NATO was looking south. Driven by its own sense of betrayal, and encouraged by the majority of NATO allies, Washington moved quickly and effectively to compel Paris and London to stop the invasion.

In the wake of the Suez Crisis, NATO convened a "Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation" (the so-called "Three Wise Men") to consider ways of avoiding similar problems in the future. To no one's surprise, the committee recommended that the allies consult more closely on out-of-area problems "...before national positions become fixed."³ Fine. But neither Britain nor France, nor for that matter the United States, were very comfortable with this recommendation. As all three governments made clear at the time, NATO could not be permitted to make extra-European policies for its sovereign members, and even the act of early and comprehensive consultation may at times be too constraining on allied governments. French Prime Minister Guy Mollet provided the most telling riposte to the committee's recommendation when he was asked why he had not at least informed the United States in advance of military action in Suez: "...we were afraid that if we let you know you would have prevented us doing it — and that we could not agree to, you see."⁴

In retrospect, Suez had a very positive, cautionary effect upon NATO. It demonstrated conclusively that there were fundamental differences of interest between the United States and key European allies on questions relating to security beyond the NATO Treaty area; differences which could not be finessed by appeals to "common security interests." On the other hand, the crisis confirmed that even intense disagreements about extra-European issues were not strong enough to undermine the NATO contract. All parties came away from Suez chastened, and with a better understanding of where out-of-area problems fit in the broader scheme of things.

This appreciation of the rules of the game endured for about a decade. By the late 1960s, however, the United States was beginning to reassess the wisdom of its policy of strict construction of Article 6 of the NATO Treaty. Two factors contributed to this reassessment. The first, and most important factor was the Vietnam War, which led to the draw-down of U.S. forces in Europe and came increasingly to look like an unsolvable problem. The second, related factor was the growing preoccupation of the Nixon-Kissinger team with the issue of American decline. Concern about the long-term danger of military and economic overdraft led Nixon and Kissinger to reconsider the issue of alliance burden sharing in general, and out-of-area cooperation in particular.

By the early 1970s the transformation of the American position on the issue of out-of-area cooperation was complete. Washington was fully on board in support of a more elastic interpretation of the concept of "common security interests," and pressing the allies to accept a larger share of the economic and social costs of preserving and enhancing NATO. Ironically, by this time most of the European imperial powers had perforce been relieved of their extra-regional responsibilities, and it was with something approaching glee that they rebuffed U.S. solicitations of support for out-of-area contingencies.

Once again, the Middle East provided the test of how the situation had changed within NATO. When U.S. aircraft, engaged in the resupply of Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, were refused base access and overflight rights by most NATO allies (the Netherlands and Portugal were the exceptions), Kissinger was incensed. He attacked the allies for behaving "like clever lawyers" who were using Article 6 of the NATO Treaty to avoid taking responsibility for the security of the Middle East region.⁵ The Europeans, meanwhile, rejected Nixon's claim that the resupply effort "is just as much in the vital interest of West Germany and the other NATO allies as it is in our interest."⁶ They also expressed alarm and outrage when Washington declared a worldwide military alert in order to deter the Soviet Union from increasing its support for the Arab nations involved in the Middle East war. The action was taken without any consultation with the NATO allies, and Kissinger's subsequent explanation for this unilateral action bears a striking similarity to Mollet's rationale for nonconsultation in 1956: "...to be frank, we could not have accepted a judgment different from our own."⁷

Just as the Suez Crisis clarified for all parties the limits of NATO out-of-area cooperation for the first half of the alliance's history, the Yom Kippur War helped all parties to understand the basic rules of the game for the second 20 years of NATO's existence. The basic difference between these two periods is illustrated in the Appendix. The first two decades of NATO's history are characterized by unsuccessful European solicitations of American help and European expressions of resentment about American meddling in their sovereign colonial affairs. By contrast, the second 20 years are characterized by frustrated American solicitations of out-of-area help from the European allies under the general rubric of burdensharing.

It is worth reiterating, however, that in neither of these two historical periods have the allies permitted out-of-area disputes to get out of control and threaten NATO's survival. It is also worth mentioning that intra-alliance recriminations over out-of-area issues declined in intensity during the 1980s, and that key European governments were demonstrating a greater willingness to assist the United States in selected overseas contingencies by the late 1980s. In order to understand why NATO governments were able to control out-of-area disputes for over 30 years, and why the

out-of-area problem became less divisive during the 1980s, we need to turn to international relations theory.

Alliance Politics: Insights from IR Theory.

All voluntary alliances between sovereign states are conditional alliances. Since an alliance involves some infringement on the decisional autonomy of its members, nations always enter into such arrangements cautiously, even grudgingly. To the extent that its power permits, a nation will try to use an alliance to influence the domestic decisions of the other member states, while resisting efforts by those states to meddle in its own affairs.

Glenn Snyder distinguishes between two types of international alliances.⁸ In the first type, nations are driven to join the alliance out of a commonly perceived threat to their survival. This type of alliance is most likely to develop in a bipolar international system in which all parties are structurally constrained and the threat posed by the other side is clear. These *general interest* alliances are likely to persist as long as the common threat persists. But Snyder also observes that nations which enter into a general interest alliance bring with them myriad particular interests which they are also anxious to protect or advance. These *particular interests* have frequently related to a nation's colonial holdings, or its colonial pretensions, which are outside of the geographic scope of the general interest alliance. As a rule, members of a general interest alliance will be guided by a sense of priority to control intra-alliance conflicts over particular interests so that they do not jeopardize the more important common interest. On the other hand, the shared recognition of common interest encourages each member to manipulate the risk of alliance collapse to advance its particular interest. In this regard, intra-alliance bargaining looks similar to the logic of nuclear brinkmanship.

NATO is the best historical example of this first type of alliance. It is a large, multilateral, voluntary alliance of sovereign states, based upon a general interest in resisting Soviet aggression against, and intimidation of, Western Europe. We also discover that NATO's 31 out-of-area disputes have been the result of competing or diverging particular interests. In accordance with the logic of competitive risk taking, the participants in these disputes have frequently engaged in intense, loud and public disagreements, but they have always stopped short of pushing the argument "over the brink." Indeed, just as the history of nuclear brinkmanship demonstrates that opponents have been extraordinarily careful about not letting things get out of hand, NATO allies have scrupulously avoided irrevocable, alliance-threatening statements or policies over out-of-area matters.

Snyder's alternative to a general interest alliance is a multipolar alliance in which "high mutual dependence coexists with plausible realignment options."⁹ History provides us with many examples of this form of alliance, as compared to general interest alliances in a bipolar system. What the two alliances have in common is that all members bring to the alliance a bundle of particular interests. Where they differ is in the relative importance accorded to these particular interests when members calculate the costs and benefits of alliance collapse. By contrast to a general interest alliance, where all parties are inclined to suppress their particular interests in the

name of an overwhelmingly more important general interest, a multipolar alliance is more likely to be composed of nations that are willing to let the alliance collapse rather than give in on a particular interest. Under these circumstances, the appropriate analogy for calculating alliance cohesion in a multipolar alliance is not nuclear brinkmanship, but rather a Beverly Hills marriage — conditional, contingent and tactical.

NATO has not yet evolved into this type of provisional arrangement. But the progressive decline of the Soviet threat during the late 1980s has certainly diluted the general interest of the Atlantic Alliance. To date, concern about the unpredictability of Europe's future has encouraged all parties to tread carefully. Indeed, the modest improvement in NATO out-of-area consultation and cooperation during the late 1980s is at least partly attributable to the concern on the part of all members that the alliance was becoming more and more vulnerable to disruption as a result of extra regional challenges, at a time when NATO's mission was still not accomplished.¹⁹ But if the trend toward a diminished East bloc threat continues, and the European Community (EC), the Western European Union (WEU) and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) continue to take on new responsibilities in the realm of security, then the feasibility of both alliance defection and alliance collapse will increase. Under these circumstances, it is entirely possible that the NATO Alliance will ultimately collapse over an out-of-area disagreement.

NATO's Test in the Persian Gulf.

During the summer of 1961, NATO's collective interest in preserving order in the Persian Gulf region was tested by Iraqi dictator Abdul Karim Qassim, who seemed poised to invade neighboring Kuwait less than one week after Britain granted Kuwait independence. Since London had signed a bilateral defense treaty with the Amir of Kuwait, and relied upon the small Gulf nation for 40 percent of its crude oil, British forces were quick to respond. In a textbook example of rapid deployment the British were able to place the first contingent of Royal Marine Commandos in Kuwait within 24 hours after receiving a request for help on June 30. Within a matter of days, a British force of nearly 6,000 troops, backed by a task force of 45 warships deployed from as far away as Hong Kong and Singapore, and aircraft armed with both conventional and nuclear weapons, was in the Gulf region. London's deterrence strategy succeeded, and, by July 14, Britain was able to begin to gradually scale down its military contingent and turn over responsibility for Kuwaiti security to an Arab League force composed of Egyptian, Sudanese, Jordanian, Saudi and Kuwaiti troops.²⁰

Britain did not solicit NATO military assistance for its actions in defense of Kuwait and, for the most part, its allies were content to let London handle the issue. The crisis nonetheless caused some problems within the U.S.-U.K. "special relationship." The Kennedy Administration, which had come to office seven months earlier with a pledge to "get on the right side of change" in the Third World, was anxious to avoid guilt by association with British interventionism in the Middle East region. Washington was also concerned about the fact that Britain had to remove forces from NATO's central front at a time when East-West tensions were escalating over Berlin. Finally, Kennedy was disturbed by the possibility that Britain would have to use the nuclear assets that it had deployed to the Gulf region (Canberra bombers) in the event of an intense military confron-

tation with Iraq. This last consideration helped to convince Kennedy to oppose the development of an independent British nuclear force.¹² For Britain, the satisfaction of having accomplished an impressive military operation in the Gulf was dampened by the realization that it was becoming increasingly harder for London to accomplish such feats, and increasingly likely that it would continue to be challenged in the Third World unless it retrenched.

Kuwait resurfaced as a Western security issue 25 years after the British terminated "Operation Bellinger" in the Persian Gulf. In the winter of 1986-87, Kuwaiti oil tankers came under attack from Iran because of Kuwaiti assistance to Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq War. By this time, Britain's "long recession" from East of Suez was complete, and Washington had supplanted London as the principal guarantor of Gulf security.¹³ Kuwait approached the Reagan Administration with an offer to reflag Kuwaiti tankers under American registry as a means of obtaining U.S. naval protection in the Gulf. When it became known that the Kuwaitis were offering the same deal to Moscow, the United States agreed to the reflagging proposal. By the spring of 1987, U.S. naval vessels were patrolling the Gulf, as a unilateral action.

Ironically, it was not an Iranian attack, but rather the Iraqi attack on the U.S.S. Stark (still not satisfactorily explained) which convinced Washington to seek allied help in the Gulf. After about three months of haggling, key European governments began to deploy naval forces to the region, to protect civilian shipping and remove mines from the Gulf. It is relevant to this study, however, that Washington never made a formal request to NATO *per se*, and that the European governments which chose to contribute to the Gulf armada did so on a unilateral basis, while coordinating their policies under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU) rather than under the aegis of NATO.¹⁴

The role of the WEU in this situation deserves to be highlighted, both because it represented an important step forward in the history of that organization and because it established a precedent which is likely to be followed, and built upon, in the future. Created in 1954 as a device for integrating West Germany into the NATO Alliance, the WEU went into a state of suspended animation after fulfilling its initial purpose. All Western governments saw the WEU as redundant during the cold war era, because its mandate to facilitate West European defense cooperation was discharged by NATO. By the mid 1980s, however, key European governments had begun to resurrect the WEU, for two reasons. First, it provided a convenient context for Franco-German discussions of common security interests, since the organization was outside of the NATO Alliance but still closely affiliated with NATO. Second, the member governments of the WEU recognized the value of bolstering the "European Pillar" of the NATO Alliance, partly to accommodate American demands for burden sharing and partly as an expression of a new regional security consciousness.¹⁵

One of the most attractive features of the WEU is its close association with NATO. Even the 1967 "Platform on European Security Interests," which was adopted by the WEU as an official statement of Europe's distinct security identity, stresses the importance of developing a European defense pillar within the context of the Atlantic Alliance.¹⁶ This complementarity between the two defense organizations made it easier for Washington to adjust to the growth of the WEU in the 1980s. It also made it easier for Washington to accept the WEU's active role in the coordination of the European contribution to the 1987 Gulf Armada. The result, according to the former

Secretary General of the WEU, Dr. Alfred Cahen, was a form of "'out-of-area' Euro-American burden-sharing, which is a novelty."¹⁷ It is important to emphasize, however, that the armada was neither a NATO operation nor a U.S.-led operation. If Washington had pressed for either of these arrangements it would probably have short-circuited any efforts at developing a common European response to the crisis.

American and European naval units completed their mine clearing and patrol duties in the Gulf in 1989, but by August of the following year the United States was once again discussing a pressing Persian Gulf security issue with its European allies.

On August 2, Iraq accomplished its historic goal of annexing Kuwait, by means of a brutally efficient blitzkrieg. The invasion elicited an almost universal condemnation from the world community, for three reasons. First, because it was such a flagrant challenge to the principles of sovereignty and nonaggression upon which the entire body of international law is based. At a time when a new international system was being built upon the remains of the collapsing cold war arrangement, most nations saw Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's action as a defining threat to the future world order. Second, when viewed against the backdrop of Iraq's recent victory in the 8-year-long Iran-Iraq War and Baghdad's development of a massive conventional military arsenal backed by 200 ballistic missiles capable of delivering chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, the invasion of Kuwait threatened to permanently disrupt the stability of the Middle East region.¹⁸ Finally, the international community faced the prospect of Iraqi domination of the world oil market if Saddam's aggression against Kuwait was followed by an invasion of Saudi Arabia or if the looming presence of Iraqi forces in Kuwait was sufficient to intimidate the house of Saud.

As the strongest nation in the international system, the United States felt a special responsibility to respond to Saddam's aggression. But Washington also understood that it was essential that the situation not devolve into a bilateral confrontation between America and Iraq. Washington moved quickly, therefore, to help raise the issue of the invasion of Kuwait in the United Nations, and within NATO.

Washington was gratified by the way in which these two institutions reacted to the crisis in the Gulf. The Atlantic Alliance was the first international organization to act, by expressing its strong and unanimous opposition to Saddam's action. The UN Security Council followed shortly thereafter. Both institutions backed their initial condemnations with a call for a comprehensive international embargo against Baghdad. Other international organizations, including the Arab League, the Western European Union and the European Community were quick to contribute their own criticisms of the Iraqi invasion and to express support for an embargo. It was apparent to all concerned, however, that much more than words would be required to convince Saddam to abandon his plans to make Kuwait the "19th province" of Iraq. An embargo would have to be policed by armed force, and the Iraqi military presence in southern Iraq and Kuwait would have to at least be matched by a coalition of forces representing the world community, both to deter further Iraqi aggression in the region and to retain the option of forcing Saddam out of Kuwait if the embargo strategy proved ineffective. The rhetoric of collective security would have to be translated into the substance of burdensharing.

From the first days of the crisis Washington had made it clear that it was prepared to bear the brunt of the risks and costs of punishing Iraq. The United States had begun to send troops to the Gulf region to help defend Saudi Arabia almost immediately after Saddam's attack on Kuwait. But since the size of the U.S. force in the region was relatively small at first, and since other nations including Egypt, Syria and Great Britain had also deployed troops to the region, Washington had no difficulty in presenting its initial military actions as a contribution to an international coalition against Saddam.

Over the next few months, however, as the costs of the struggle with Iraq escalated, and the risk of a major war in the Gulf became more immediate, the coalition came more and more to look like an American show — run out of Washington, with primarily American actors, and mostly at American expense. The United States contributed 90 percent of the forces deployed in combat positions in the Gulf and established itself as the principal spokesman for the international community in challenging Iraq.¹⁹ U.S. policy makers argued that Washington had to take the lead against Saddam in order to hold the coalition together and provide it with a credible military capability. But others warned that by stepping into the spotlight the United States was playing into Iraq's hands and providing it with opportunities to redefine the crisis and disrupt the international coalition.

During the fall and winter months, the wisdom of Napoleon's observation that "If I must fight, let it be against a coalition," became increasingly apparent, as cracks began to show in the international coalition against Iraq.

Washington turned instinctively to its NATO allies to help hold the coalition together. Since the issues at stake in the Gulf were recognized by all of the allies as common security interests, the United States continued to receive unanimous political support within NATO for its stand against Iraq. Some Western experts and policy makers were so impressed by this demonstration of alliance solidarity that they presented the Kuwait crisis as an opportunity to expand NATO's boundaries, either informally (by disregarding the geographic constraints imposed by Article 6 of the Treaty) or formally (by revising the Treaty to permit NATO to deal with extra-European security threats). In the words of David Abshire, former U.S. Ambassador to NATO: "The question before us today is whether NATO can retain the momentum and unity of purpose generated by the Gulf crisis to meet future 'out-of-area' challenges, which are likely to characterize the 1990s."²⁰

But the individuals who depicted the Kuwait crisis as a model for future NATO out-of-area cooperation gave insufficient attention the problems that were just below the surface. While preserving the common front of opposition to Saddam's aggression, NATO members made it clear during bilateral and multilateral meetings that they held some important differences of opinion about what should be done in the Gulf, and who should do it. In September, NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner stated that there was a "unanimous conviction that still more can and should be done" by Washington's allies to assist the United States in Operation Desert Shield. But with the exception of Britain and, to a lesser extent, France, Washington continued to be disappointed by the level of direct military support provided by the European allies. U.S. Congressman Les Aspin summarized the American mood: "Europe has not fully measured up to expectations....The bulk of European allies have given solid (and painless) political support, passable economic support, and mere token military support."²¹ Key European allies also began

to express differences with the United States over the question of how much diplomacy was required before the Western community opted for war in the Gulf. For example, President George Bush and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl were clearly speaking from two different texts during Bush's visit to Germany in November. Kohl's frequent references to the "wish that negotiations would lead to a peaceful outcome" discomfited the American President, who had only recently opted for a massive increase in the size of the U.S. Gulf force in support of an offensive strategy against Iraq.

Saddam Hussein actively encouraged these fissiparous pressures within NATO and in the larger international coalition, by three strategies. First, he consistently depicted the crisis as a U.S.-Iraqi confrontation and cast himself in the role of an Arab leader victimized by Western imperialism. This campaign had little effect on the NATO community, but it did resonate within the Third World in general and within the Middle East in particular. Second, Saddam extracted political advantage from the Western hostages which had been trapped in Iraq and Kuwait since the invasion. He did so first by the selective release of hostages. France, Germany and Japan were the nations which were accorded the highest priority in this campaign to fuel intra-coalition resentments and recriminations. Baghdad made no effort to disguise its intentions in this regard. Thus, at the time that it announced plans to release all remaining German hostages, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry explained the action as "...a message of encouragement to the people of Europe to take more independent actions and stand against the arrogant position of the Americans who are calling for war."²² Baghdad also derived political benefits from his surprise announcement of plans to release all remaining Western hostages as a demonstration of Iraq's peaceful intent and concern for human rights.

The third, and by far the most effective, Iraqi strategy for encouraging disagreement within the Western camp was Saddam's campaign to shift the focus of international attention away from the Kuwait situation by stressing the "linkage" between instability in the Gulf and the enduring problem of Israeli occupation of territories acquired during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Here was an issue which could generate internecine tensions not only among the Arab members of the coalition but also between Washington and its European allies. The aforementioned disagreement between Washington and its NATO allies over the America's resupply of Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War illustrates the breadth and depth of U.S.-European disagreement over Israel. After 1973, all parties understood that this was an issue which had to be kept out of the NATO forum, which is precisely why it was so attractive to Saddam Hussein.

In spite of Saddam's best efforts, NATO's political coalition held together. But as the UN Security Council deadline of January 15 approached, the strains became more evident within the alliance.²³ Various American congressmen fastened on the Kuwait crisis in order to berate Japan and the NATO allies for not carrying a "fair share" of the military and financial burden of common security. U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney reportedly pressed the case for more military, logistic and financial support during a December meeting with other NATO defense ministers in Brussels, but he did not press very hard, and he did not permit the issue to become a matter for public recrimination within the alliance. As one U.S. official explained, "...we are beyond the point of needing to use ministerials" to accomplish American military goals in the Gulf.²⁴

Washington's European allies also kept their concerns and disagreements under control. Various governments expressed quiet but clear concern about Washington's management of the Kuwait crisis — arguing that the United States had foreclosed diplomatic options and moved too quickly to a war posture in the Gulf. Some of Washington's allies were also attracted to the idea of linking Gulf security with Arab-Israeli relations, although they stopped short of officially sanctioning such a linkage policy. The European position was reflected in two resolutions passed by the European Community during a summit meeting in December. The first statement reiterated the EC's support for all 12 UN Security Council Resolutions condemning Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait, but a separate (and therefore "unlinked") statement called for an Arab-Israeli peace conference under UN auspices.²⁵

All NATO members nonetheless recognized that there was little to be gained, and much to be lost, if a shouting match erupted within the alliance over the Kuwait issue. And once the shooting started in the Gulf on the morning of January 17, the allies closed ranks around the U.S.-led war effort. There is every reason to believe that the NATO core of the anti-Saddam coalition will hold together until the conflict ends. In this regard, Saddam's strategy of divide and conquer has proven to be a failure. But some Western analysts will be encouraged to make more of this test of Western solidarity than is justified. For NATO's handling of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has been a study in the politics of conflict avoidance and mutual accommodation rather than a model of common action against a commonly perceived enemy beyond the existing NATO boundaries.

Conclusion.

The circumstances surrounding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait were almost ideal from the point of view of anyone wishing to encourage NATO to play a military role beyond the established Treaty area.

- The issue was of direct strategic relevance to all NATO members because of the threat which Saddam posed to the world oil market. From the start of the crisis all NATO allies also recognized an interest in the preservation of peace and stability throughout the Middle East region.
- As the first post-cold war crisis, it did not involve the risk of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Indeed, Moscow made it clear that it was on board in support of all 12 UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq.
- The aggression against Kuwait was so blatant and grotesque that it galvanized the international community and resulted in both global (UN) and regional (Arab League) condemnation of Baghdad's action. Thus NATO governments did not face the prospect of being isolated in the world community if they took strong action against Iraq.
- The United States made it clear in the early stages of the crisis that it was willing and able to bear most of the costs for any action taken against Saddam, as long as it could rely upon

its allies for strong political backing, reasonable financial and logistical support, and whatever level of military assistance the separate NATO governments wished to contribute.

Encouraged by these very positive circumstances, the NATO Council of Ministers was able to act in unison to condemn Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and call for an international embargo against Baghdad. This display of allied political solidarity in turn convinced various Western experts and policy makers that the time had finally come for NATO to transcend its artificial boundaries. NATO Commander General John Galvin argued that the crisis in the Gulf demonstrated that NATO should adopt a new "fire brigade" strategy designed to facilitate rapid deployment beyond the existing NATO Treaty area.²⁶ And, in late November, British Defence Secretary Tom King advised the North Atlantic Assembly that the Kuwait crisis illustrated the need "either to amend the North Atlantic Treaty or adopt a more flexible interpretation of the existing Treaty to reflect changing security conditions and to facilitate NATO as a collective entity to respond to threats outside of the area."²⁷

The opposite is in fact the case. The Kuwait crisis illustrates that even under the best of circumstances there are strict limits to what can be expected from a regional alliance created for a specific defensive purpose. There is an interesting similarity here between the positions taken by Washington and its European allies on the issue of war versus diplomacy in the Gulf and the debates which surfaced during the 1980s over the INF issue. During the INF debates the United States and its allies were officially united in support of a "dual track" approach to the Soviet Union (negotiations backed by the threat of American missile deployments). One did not have to look very closely, however, to discover a good deal of disagreement between an Anglo-American bloc, which leaned in favor of deployments, and a European-Canadian bloc which leaned in favor of more negotiation and more diplomatic flexibility prior to deployment. In the case of the Kuwait crisis, political condemnation backed by an embargo served as the basis for a common Western position during the early stages of the crisis. As the January 15 deadline approached, however, this common Alliance policy tended to fall between the increasingly bifurcated positions of a U.S.-UK bloc which was preparing for war and a European-Canadian bloc which was scrambling to find a diplomatic formula which would preempt a conflict in the Gulf. NATO governments nonetheless demonstrated caution and moderation in their handling of these policy differences, due to a common concern that the alliance might not survive a recriminatory public dispute over the Kuwait issue in an era of declining Soviet threat.

This is the most important lesson of the Kuwait crisis; not to press too hard within the NATO forum on an issue which is literally marginal to the alliance's established purpose. It was the lesson of Suez and Afghanistan and the Yom Kippur War. And it is even more true today in a situation in which the risk of alliance collapse over an out-of-area dispute has never been greater.

Another lesson of the Kuwait crisis is that the WEU has the potential to become the primary forum for European out-of-area defense cooperation if it is permitted to do so. Building upon the experiences of the 1987 Gulf armada, the members of the WEU were able to respond quickly and effectively to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Within three weeks of the attack by Saddam's forces, foreign and defense ministers of the nine WEU governments had succeeded in developing general guidelines for coordinated action in the Gulf. Over the next few months arrangements were worked out within the WEU for direct military cooperation ("points of contact")

between naval, air and ground forces as well as for logistical and medical coordination and intelligence sharing.²⁸ Such military cooperation was easier to achieve within the WEU than within NATO for three reasons:

1. Because of the smaller size of the WEU (9 versus 16 members) and the fact that some of the NATO members who are not in the WEU are precisely those governments that have traditionally been critical of allied out-of-area actions (i.e., the Scandinavian allies and Greece);
2. Because the WEU Treaty, by contrast to the NATO Treaty, has no geographic delimitation; (This is why it was relatively easy and noncontroversial for the members of the WEU to use the organization to coordinate their activities in the Persian Gulf in 1987 and 1990);²⁹ and,
3. Because intra-European consensus is sometimes easier to achieve than trans-Atlantic consensus due to the fact that the United States continues to approach extra-European security issues from the point of view of a great, global power while its continental European allies, for all of their dependence on overseas trade and overseas sources of energy and resources, are more inclined to view such crises from the point of view of middle, regional powers.

For these reasons, a stronger WEU is in the interest of Western security, and by implication, in the interest of the United States. Yet the WEU will only be effective if it retains its distinct institutional identity as a bridge between NATO and the EC. If it is subsumed within the European Community, as some European governments propose, it will become diluted by the larger and more diverse membership of the EC, and drift toward the politics of "civilian power Europe" which have characterized that organization since the 1970s.³⁰

The recent proposal by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd makes sense precisely because it will help to preserve the identity of the WEU as a bridge between NATO and the EC. Mr. Hurd has recommended that the headquarters of the WEU, which are currently divided between Paris and London, be consolidated in Brussels to facilitate cooperation between the WEU, the EC and NATO, and that the same ambassadors be accredited to both NATO and the WEU. A further step in the right direction would be the creation of a WEU rapid deployment force, as proposed by British representatives and by WEU Secretary General Willem van Eekelen.³¹

Even if the WEU develops into a much more effective instrument for European out-of-area defense cooperation, NATO will still have an important role to play as the principal forum for consultation between the nations of the Atlantic Community regarding extra-regional security threats (in accordance with Article 4 of the NATO Treaty). During the 1980s, NATO established a useful set of procedures for informal and voluntary consultation in response to out-of-area problems.³² These procedures proved to be very effective during the Kuwait crisis. The alliance could do a bit more to facilitate intra-NATO consultation on extra-regional threats, including the establishment of a separate directorate within its International Staff with responsibility for providing the Secretary General with military, political, economic and legal analyses of out-of-area issues, from a NATO perspective. But it would be unwise to attempt to go much beyond this kind of

bureaucratic tinkering in order to improve NATO's ability to respond to threats beyond the Treaty area.

To press the case for a more elastic NATO at this time would force all allied governments to directly and publicly confront issues that they have wisely kept under wraps. The result might well be the premature disintegration of the alliance. NATO has been an extraordinary, unprecedented, success for over 40 years because of the clear and present danger posed by the Soviet Union. This is what NATO Secretary General P.H. Spaak meant when he stated that the true father of the alliance was Joseph Stalin. The genius of the men who wrote the NATO Treaty — including Robert Lovett, Charles Bohlen and Dean Acheson — was in their recognition of the need to establish clear regional boundaries for the alliance in order to concentrate the attention and the efforts of all members on the paramount threat. From time to time, the unity and consensus exhibited by NATO in the face of the direct Soviet threat has encouraged scholars and policy makers to claim that the common security interests of the alliance extended beyond the established Treaty boundaries. History has consistently rebuffed such claims, and recent events have confirmed the lessons of history.

ENDNOTES

1. Washington did support a formal NATO declaration of "wholehearted admiration" for the French war effort in Indochina in 1952, but the limit of American and NATO backing was demonstrated two years later, at Dien Bien Phu.

2. "Talks at Washington Between the United States and the United Kingdom on Political and Economic Subjects Concerning the Near East," *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* 1949 Volume 6, "The Far East and Australasia," pp. 50-52.

3. The text of the committee's report is in the Ministerial Sessions of the North Atlantic Council, the Defense Planning Committee, and the Nuclear Planning Group, "Text of Final (NATO) Communiqués, 1949-74," Brussels, NATO Information Service, 1975, pp. 101-104.

4. Quoted by Dwight Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 77.

5. Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979, p. 711.

6. Quoted by Elizabeth Sherwood, *Allies in Crisis: Meeting Global Challenges to Western Security*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 138.

7. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1982, p. 713.

8. Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, 36, #4, 1984, p. 464.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 484-485.

10. A complementary reason for improved cooperation in the late 1980s is that the European allies saw conditional out-of-area support as the least expensive way of accommodating Washington on the issue of burdensharing. These explanations are discussed in D. Stuart and W. Tow, *The Limits of Alliance: NATO Out-Of-Area Problems Since 1949*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 96-99, 319-322.

11. For background, see J.E. Peterson, *Defending Arabia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986, p. 89; Thomas McNaugher, *Arms and Oil*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985, p. 150; and Stuart and Tow, *Limits of Alliance*, pp. 117-118.

12. This issue came to a head in 1962, during the Anglo-American discussions in Nassau about the future of the British nuclear deterrent. Richard Neustadt's book, *Alliance Politics*, New York: Columbia, 1970, is still one of the best studies of Anglo-American defense politics during this period.

13. For background, see Gary Sick, "An American Perspective," in Paul Jabber, *et al.*, *Great Power Interests in the Persian Gulf*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1989, pp. 16-42.

14. The Kuwaiti reflagging episode, and the formation of the Gulf armada, are discussed by Elizabeth Sherwood, *Allies in Crisis*, pp. 178-183.

15. See Douglas Stuart, "NATO in the 1980's, Between European Pillar and European House," *Armed Forces and Society*, Spring 1990.

16. The text of the "Platform on European Security Interests, The Hague, 27 October 1987," is reprinted and analyzed by Panos Tsakaloyannis, ed., *Western European Security in a Changing World: From the Reactivation of the WEU to the Single European Act*, Working Document, European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht, The Netherlands, 1988.

17. Alfred Cahen, "The Western European Union (WEU) and NATO: Strengthening the Second Pillar of the Alliance," The Atlantic Council of the United States, *Occasional Papers*, January 1990, Washington, D.C.

18. For an in-depth analysis of Iraqi power in the wake of the Iran-Iraq War, see Stephen Pelletiere, Douglas Johndon and Leif Rosenberger, *Iraqi Power and U.S. Security in the Middle East*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1990.

19. The figure of 90 percent was cited by Senator Donald Riegle (D-Michigan) in Senate testimony on January 11, 1991, broadcast live on the C-span television network.

20. David Abshire, "NATO Can Ponder a Global Role..." *The Wall Street Journal* (European Edition), August 24, 1990, p. 4.

21. Michael Gordon, "U.S. Asks Allies to Help Move Troops to Gulf," *The New York Times*, November 24, 1990, p. 4.

22. Quoted in *The New York Times*, November 21, 1990, p. 11.

23. The Security Council gave Iraq until this date to remove its forces from Kuwait. After January 15 any nation could take whatever action it felt was necessary to assist the UN in expelling Iraq from Kuwait.

24. R. Jeffrey Smith, "Cheney Is Said To Seek Aid From NATO States," *The Washington Post*, December 7, 1990, p. 25.

25. "Pygmy Roars," *The Economist*, January 4, 1991, p. 48.

26. George Wilson, "NATO Commander Envisions 'Fire Brigade' Role," *The Washington Post*, December 5, 1990, p. 29.

27. Tim Butcher, "King Demands Worldwide Role for NATO Troops," *London Daily Telegraph*, November 29, 1990.

28. For a survey, with analysis, see Willem van Eekelen, "WEU and the Gulf Crisis," *Survival*, Vol. 32, #6, November/December 1990, pp. 519-532.

29. Five members of the WEU contributed naval forces to the Gulf Armada (Belgium, Britain, France, Holland and Italy). Germany deployed naval forces to the Mediterranean to compensate for allied vessels deployed to the Gulf, and Luxembourg offered financial assistance to the armada. Since the deployment of the Gulf Armada, the membership of the WEU has been expanded to include Portugal and Spain.

30. For a discussion and critique of "civilian power Europe," see Hedley Bull, "Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21, September/December 1982, pp. 149-170.

31. See Robert Mauthner, "U.S. Backs Stronger European Security and Defence Role," *London Financial Times*, December 18, 1990, p. 2; and Craig Whitney, "Amid Gulf Crisis and Cold War End, Questions on U.S. and NATO Roles," *The New York Times*, December 26, 1990, p. 10.

32. For a discussion of the procedures established within NATO for "analysis, consultation and compensation" in the event of an out-of-area crisis, see Stuart and Tow, *Limits*, pp. 321-322.

APPENDIX

EXTRA-REGIONAL CHALLENGES TO NATO SOLIDARITY: 1949-1990

	EVENT (YEAR)	ISSUE
1.	Indonesia (1949)	U.S. criticisms of Netherlands' colonial policy influence Dutch Parliament debate about joining NATO
2.	Middle East (1949-53)	U.S. and UK disagree over formation of a Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) to complement NATO
3.	Indochina (1949-54)	Periodic disputes over French Indochina campaign, intense French recrimination after Dien Bien Phu
4.	Korean War (1950-53)	Essentially collaborative, but some allied disagreements over U.S. policies and goals in Asia and their impact on NATO preparedness
5.	ANZUS (1951-53)	UK frustrated in periodic attempts to use NATO forum to gain access to ANZUS alliance
6.	Suez (1956)	Intense intra-Alliance conflict, with U.S. and other allies condemning UK and France for military actions against Nasser
7.	Lebanon/ Jordan (1958)	Essentially collaborative, but U.S. and UK actions reflect differing interests and policies in Middle East
8.	Tunisia (1958-61)	Periodic French criticisms of allied "meddling" in its <i>Domaine Reserve</i>
9.	Laos (1959-61)	U.S. solicits UK and French support, most discussions take place in SEATO rather than NATO
10.	Kuwait (1961)	U.S. and other allies generally support UK action, some UK disagreement with Turks over overflight and basing rights, moderate U.S. and UK disagreement over management of crisis, UK declines U.S. offer to send naval forces
11.	Brunei (1961)	Moderate U.S. concern about UK global overextension and colonialism

12.	Congo (1961)	Brief but intense confrontation between U.S. and Belgium over colonial issue
13.	Portuguese Africa (1961-74)	Initially intense U.S.-Portuguese disagreement over colonialism, then periodic disputes between Lisbon and various allies (most notably, Scandinavian states)
14.	Vietnam (1961-75)	Various allies express concern about impact of U.S. policies on western security and NATO preparedness, periodic U.S. complaints about allied lack of support, residual impact on U.S. views about alliance burden sharing
15.	Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)	Essentially collaborative, but intense Turkish resentment of U.S. nonconsultation on status of U.S. missiles in Turkey
16.	Irian Jaya (1962)	Controlled U.S./Dutch dispute over colonialism
17.	Six Day War (1967)	Some disagreement between U.S. and certain allies (most notably, France) over issues at stake and sources of conflict
18.	Malaysia (1963-66)	UK uses SEATO and to a lesser extent NATO to solicit support for its actions; periodic UK expressions of resentment for lack of support
19.	Yom Kippur War (1973)	Intense U.S. criticisms of allied refusal to provide basing and overflight rights
20.	Arab Oil Boycott (1973)	Intra-Alliance recriminations over different interpretations of issues involved and policies pursued
21.	Zaire (1978)	Essentially collaborative, but some dispute among U.S., Belgium and France over policies and goals
22.	Afghanistan (1979)	Intense dispute between U.S. and certain allies due to differing interpretations of Soviet actions and differing responses
23.	Yamal Pipeline (1979-83)	U.S. pressure on selected allies generates dispute within NATO

24.	Terrorism (1981-90)	Periodic disagreements between U.S. and selected allies over differing response to terrorist activities
25.	Persian Gulf Security (1979-90)	Initial disagreements as spillover from Afghanistan invasion and Carter Doctrine, muted over time
26.	Falklands (1982)	Essentially collaborative, but some criticisms (particularly by Spain) of UK actions
27.	Chad (1982-84)	Controlled Franco-American disagreement over issues involved and policies pursued
28.	Grenada (1983)	Strong, but controlled, British resentment of U.S. actions
29.	<i>Achille Lauro</i> (1983)	Intense Italian criticism of U.S. handling of crisis
30.	Lebanon (1981-84)	Essentially collaborative but some differences of interpretation and policy between NATO members of Multinational Force
31.	Libya (1985-89)	Periodic disputes within NATO (in particular, between U.S. and Italy) over appropriate policies

NOTE: For analyses of most of the above-listed out-of-area crises, see Stuart and Tow, *Limits, passim*.

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